

2008 ADE/CEF Promising Practice Awards Part 1: Cover Sheet

Practice Name: Sycamore Mentor Program

Name of Principal: Ken Graff

Official School Name: Sycamore Elementary School

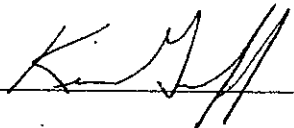
School Mailing Address: 16701 S. Houghton Rd Tel. (520) 879-2500 ext. 2504

School Website: <http://syc.vail.k12.az.us>

City: Corona Zip Code: 85641

Email Address: graffk@vail.k12.az.us

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate. If my program is recognized as a Promising Practice the contents of this application may be available to the public.



(Principal's signature) Date 11/26/07

Name of Superintendent: Calvin Baker

District Name: Vail School District

Tel. (520) 879-2000

District Mailing: PO Box 800

City: Vail Zip Code: 85641

Email Address: bakerc@vail.k12.az.us

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.



(Superintendent's Signature) Date 11/26/07

2008 ADE/CEF Promising Practices Awards

Part II: Background Information

1. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city ☐ Suburban
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☒ Small city or town in a rural area ☐ Rural

2. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

_____ If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

3. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school building:

Pre-K <u>94</u>	5th <u>133</u>	10th _____
1st <u>127</u>	6th _____	11th _____
2nd <u>131</u>	7th _____	12th _____
3rd <u>132</u>	8th _____	
4th <u>141</u>	9th _____	TOTAL: _____

4. Limited English proficient students in the school: 2.2 % 17 Total Number

Number of languages represented: 1 Specify languages: Spanish

5. Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals: 23 % 172 Total Number

If this method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

The Sycamore Elementary Mentoring Program

1. What is the practice and how have you implemented it in your school?

The Sycamore Mentoring Program began in 2005 as a collaboration between Sycamore Elementary students and Corona Foothills Middle School Leadership students. The program was developed to provide at-risk elementary children support with academics, behavior, and character education, as well as providing middle school leadership students (many who attended Sycamore) the opportunity to become positive role models to younger children and develop a sense of community.

The beauty of the program is that students are specifically matched based on their interests, special skills and individual needs. Over the course of the year, mentors and mentees build a special relationship and a close bond. They might work on developing peer relationships, peacefully resolving problems, or long division, but the true benefit of the partnership is the positive individual attention. The results: positive academic and character achievements are being seen as a result of the Mentoring Program.

2. How does the specific practice contribute to character development?

Students that have both academic and social or behavioral needs are selected to receive a mentor. Each mentor then works with the mentee to support his or her individual needs. For example, some students may struggle with completing classwork and others may have difficulty making friends due to shyness. In either case, specific individual attention and incentives provide a positive experience for at-risk children.

Students from kindergarten to 8th grade participate in the Mentoring Program. With a focus on meeting individual needs, the program supports all of the students involved. Another accomplishment of the program is the connection that is formed between older and younger

students. Positive peer relationships, problem solving skills, and time management are just a few of the benefits the program provides for students.

Middle School Mentors spend several weeks in training, developing skills and strategies to model good character and learning how to work with younger students. Often students with similar disabilities are partnered together, sharing parallel struggles that only they can understand. For example, a Middle School Diabetic Mentor is placed in a classroom with a first grade diabetic student. Both wear pumps and connect on a level few other students will ever understand.

3. What impact does the practice have on students in your school?

One accomplishment Sycamore has experienced is a 15% drop in disciplinary referrals to the front office. Students who are at risk of being sent out of the classroom are identified through this program and assigned a mentor. By identifying their individual needs, behavior issues are mitigated. This reduces the amount of instructional time lost dealing with behavioral issues. Moreover, it raises self-esteem for students in both schools and provides opportunities for students to develop and foster relationships outside their normal peer group.

The Mentoring Program has impacted our school with gains shown on our monthly math and reading screenings. Last year students involved in the mentoring program showed a 22% gain in reading and a 47% gain in math between August and May. In addition to academic success student referrals for discipline and behavior have decreased in severity and number.

I love my buddy, I can't wait until he comes over and sees me. He helps me with my work and to be good. I love playing catch with him. Bobby Pratt - 2nd Grade